

PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD

TEXT: AMOS 4:1-13

Introduction:

1. Chapter 4 is a continuation of chapter 3 and begins the same way: “Hear this word...” (4:1; cf. 3:1; 5:1).
2. The “word” from God was a message of judgment. Because of Israel’s persistence in sin, God was going to send their enemies, the Assyrians, to destroy the city of Samaria.
3. God was going to allow them to be led into captivity.
4. The key verse is verse 12: “Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.”

I. PREPARE TO MEET OUR HOLY GOD.

II. PREPARE TO MEET THE SOVEREIGN GOD.

III. PREPARE TO MEET THE CREATOR GOD.

I. PREPARE TO MEET OUR HOLY GOD (4:2a).

1. God addresses the women of Israel first. He calls them “ye kine (cows) of Bashan” (4:1; cf. 4:3). Bashan was an area between Mt. Hermon and the mountains of Gilead, known for its cattle.
2. God created women to be beautiful and gracious, but worldly women have degraded womanhood. So God refers to them as “kine” – lazy, spoiled women who lived luxuriously in self-indulgence.
3. “The Lord GOD hath sworn by his holiness” (4:2a). In the Bible, God’s holiness is emphasized more than any of His other attributes.
4. “God hath sworn” (4:2) – therefore it would surely come to pass.
5. Israel was “hooked” on sin, but soon God would “hook” them in judgment (4:2).
6. This is not just a figure of speech. The cruel Assyrians used to literally put hooks through their captives’ lips and noses.
7. Amos’ prophecy was literally fulfilled (II Kings 19:20, 28).
8. “Come to Bethel, and transgress...” (4:4a). Amos is using sarcasm and irony. God never encourages anyone to “transgress.”
9. “Bethel” means “house of God,” but backslidden Israelites had made it a house of idols (cf. I Kings 12:28-32; Amos 5:5, 6).
10. “Gilgal” (4:4; cf. Josh. 5:9) had become a center for syncretistic worship (cf. Hosea 4:15; 9:15; 12:11).
11. The Israelites were religious hypocrites – they were tithing but at the same time they were worshiping idols (Amos 4:4).

12. Their worship was nothing but empty ritual, devoid of any spirituality or enthusiasm.
13. “And offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven...” (4:5a). In the Bible, leaven represents sin and false doctrine.
 - “Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees” (Matt. 16:6).
 - “And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod” (Mark 8:15).
 - “Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy” (Luke 12:1).
 - “Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (I Cor. 5:8).
 - “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Gal. 5:9).
14. “For this liketh you, O ye children of Israel” (Amos 4:5). Since the days of Cain, worldly, unregenerate sinners like to be religious but they do not want to obey God.
15. The prophet Jeremiah said, “The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so” (Jer. 5:31).

II. PREPARE TO MEET THE SOVEREIGN GOD.

1. The LORD sent Israel many warnings, but Israel ignored the various warnings and persisted in sin.
2. Isaiah 9:13 says, “For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the LORD of hosts.”
3. Jeremiah 5:3 says, “O LORD, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return.”
4. Their stubborn refusal to repent is emphasized by repetition.
 - God sent them famine (4:6).
 - God withheld the rain (4:7, 8).
 - God smote them with “blasting and mildew” (4:9). “Blasting” is the effect of the withering east wind from the dry desert. In Pharaoh’s dream, seven thin ears “blasted with the east wind” sprung up after the seven good ears of corn (Genesis 41:6).
 - In this case, mildew is caused from excessive drought, not moisture.
 - God sent them pestilence (4:10a).
 - God slew their young men in war (4:10b). The unburied dead bodies made an awful stink but Israel still refused to repent.

- God's wrath was comparable to when He overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah (4:11). The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is often mentioned in the Bible as an example of how God deals with sin (cf. II Peter 2:6).
5. Their time was nearly up (4:12; cf. 4:2).
 6. God in His grace and mercy was still giving them time to repent (Amos 5:4, 6, 8, 14, 15).

III. PREPARE TO MEET THE CREATOR GOD (4:13).

1. God is the omnipotent Creator of everything.
2. God is the all-wise and omniscient God – “and declareth unto man what is his thought” (4:13).
3. God is the omnipresent God that “maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth” (4:13).
4. He is the mighty and sovereign “LORD, The God of (angelic) hosts” (4:13).

CONCLUSION:

1. On April 18, 1906, a terrible earthquake hit San Francisco and destroyed the city. HA Ironside was there at that time and he wrote that he “was an eyewitness to its horrors.”
2. “Not the least solemn thing noticed was the persistent efforts of the preachers of all denominations to quiet the fears of the populace by assuring them that *God* had no part in the calamitous events that had taken place. Natural causes explained everything! This the Christless were only too ready to believe; and thus were their partially awakened consciences lulled to rest and their ears closed against the voice of Him who through Amos said, ‘I have overthrown some of you!’”
3. Ironside warned people that the earthquake was sent from God, preaching throughout the city, using Amos 4:11, 12 as his text.
4. He reported that many souls were saved as a result.